



**April 19, 2021**

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**Employee Spotlight**

***Jefferson Work Area – Thank You!***

- ◆ Employees of the Jefferson Work Area completed a burn for Fluvanna Parks and Recreation's Pleasant Grove Park. Ellen Powell (conservation educator) documented the burn for the recent Field Notes post.
- ◆ In order to make this work, Fluvanna County, VDOF, the local Master Naturalist chapter and Fluvanna Volunteer Fire Department (VFD) all worked to have a pre-burn public education campaign. On the day of the burn VDOT, Fluvanna VFD, and VDOF coordinated resources to ensure public safety during the burn by closing park entrances, having adequate signage on Rt. 53 and patrolling the park to ensure

the park closure was heeded by the public. After the burn we received the following note from Fluvanna County Parks and Recreation Director Aaron Spitzer:

- “I wanted to thank you for your professionalism during the control burns! I learned a lot and I know we had some tough times trying to get the burn in so thank you for what you did! Moving forward, I will reach out in late October/early November to see when we should try to schedule the other field at Pleasant Grove Park to burn and hopefully finish the field next to the high school. Thanks Again”

### ***Jennifer Leach – Great Job!***

- ◆ Jennifer Leach (conservation, markets and public information program coordinator) received the following note from Fred Abbey, Certified Master Naturalist trained by Jim McGlone.
    - “On behalf of the USO Warrior and Family Center at Fort Belvoir, I am writing to request a donation of 100 copies of the Native Virginia Tree book. A couple of years back your department was gracious to donate a box of the tree books which we have used in many different types of programming with service members and their families. We received exceptional interest and feedback about our nature programs and have decided to expand the programs to Fort Meyer and Quantico. Because of covid protocols we are not reusing the books and are allowing the clients to keep them. In some of our programs we utilize the PDF version and reproduce selected pages based on the outdoor experience. We intend to continue this practice, but there are some programs that this is not possible. Our immediate plans are to promote a family activity self-paced at Arlington National Cemetery over Memorial Day weekend to honor the fallen and follow the historic tree walks.”
- Jennifer not only provided the requested materials, but also put together a package of publications for children such as ‘Enjoy Nature Near you in Spring, summer, fall winter; Let’s Learn About Trees’ Coloring book.”

### ***Brad Wright and the Randolph Park Control Burn Team – Thank You!***

- ◆ Below are two notes of appreciation from a community assistance funded prescribed burn in Pulaski County from Pulaski County’s Assistant County Administrator Anthony Akers and Parks and Recreation Director Shay Dunnigan. There is also an article on the event.
  - “Thank you and all those involved with this controlled burn at Randolph Park. These burns have dramatically enhanced our wooded areas and we can’t thank you enough for these annual burns. Thank you all again!”
  - “As Anthony stated, thank you and your team for all the tremendous work in our wooded area at Randolph Park. This makes such a positive impact on our facility and the community that utilizes our trails and disc golf course. Thank you! “
  - [Park Forest gets health, safety boost.](#)

## **Employee News**

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### ***Welcome to VDOF!***

- ◆ We would like to welcome Chad Briggs to the VDOF as a forest technician assigned to the Shenandoah work area. Chad has a Bachelor's Degree in Communication from Clarion University of Pennsylvania, and is currently pursuing an Associate’s Degree in Fire Science from Northern Virginia Community College. He has been working with Prince William County Fire and Rescue since 2003, has been involved in wildland fire with the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) since 1994, and has been a part time firefighter with VDOF since 2008. We are very excited to

be able to use Chad's experience in fire and leadership in a full-time capacity within the Central Region and the VDOF. Chad's start date was April 12.

- ◆ We welcome Collin Sapp to the Western Region as a Forest Technician in our Headwaters work area. Collin has an Associate's Degree in Forestry from Allegheny College. He most recently was employed by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Forest Service as a technician and performed many of the same duties required of technicians in Virginia. He reports to work on April 26.

### **Leaving VDOF!**

- ◆ Dylan White (Blue Ridge work area forest technician) is resigning his position on April 22 to pursue a new opportunity. Best of luck on your new adventure.
- ◆ Chad Wisecarver (Heartland work area forest technician) is resigning his position on April 27 to pursue a new opportunity. Best of luck on your new adventure.

### **Open Enrollment for Health Benefits**

- ◆ Open Enrollment for health benefits and flexible spending accounts (FSAs) will take place from *May 3 through May 17* this year for elections effective on July 1, 2021. **This is the time each year you are eligible to make changes to your health benefits and flexible spending accounts (FSAs) without a mid-year qualifying event. Watch for information to be mailed to your home address and emails from the Human Resource Office.**

## **News You Can Use**

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### **Wood Drying Webinars with Dr. Bryan Bond**

- ◆ The VA Urban Wood Group, in partnership with Virginia Tech Forestry Extension is offering two, FREE, lunch-n-learn Wood Drying webinars with Virginia Tech's Dr. Brian Bond!
  - The webinars will occur on consecutive Wednesdays, **April 21 & 28** from noon until 1 PM. International Society Arboricultural (ISA) and Society of American Foresters (SAF) continuing education credits are available.
  - Here's the registration link >> <https://conta.cc/39KkWWy>

### **Virginia Academy of Natural Resources Age Range**

- ◆ The age range for Virginia Academy of Natural Resources has been adjusted to include current 8th graders. Please spread the word about this virtual "camp" experience for grades 8-12, to be held July 12-16. The low fee of only \$25 includes a packet of tools and materials to be used in the at-home field portion of camp. Apply online at <https://forms.gle/9mRUtyoaPRvFQY2N9> by **April 30**.
  - Flyer: <https://dof.virginia.gov/forestry/camp/VANR%20flier.pdf>

### **SPCC Cardholder & Supervisor Training**

- ◆ SPCC training is now available in the Learning Center: <https://covlc.virginia.gov/>. All training and certifications are mandatory and due no later than **April 30, 2021**.
- ◆ To access, search on keyword SPCC 2021 (exact phrase) in the course catalog and select:
  - DOA - Cardholder Supervisor Reviewer Training 2021
  - DOA - SPCC Cardholder Training 2021
- ◆ If you need assistance logging into the Learning Center, please contact Kristi Clore at 434.220.9029 or [Kristi.clore@dof.virginia.gov](mailto:Kristi.clore@dof.virginia.gov). (Note: Google Chrome is the recommended browser for all trainings.)

*Users who only have Internet Explorer will need to Delete Browsing History/Cookies and Turn OFF Compatibility View.)*

## **Fireresponse Question of the Week**

- ◆ What is the function of the “*My Edits*” button on the home screen of the mobile app?
  - In response to problems syncing mobile data in locations where there is poor or no cell coverage, the *My Edits* button was introduced so that data syncs became an active function triggered by the user, rather than an automatic background function of the mobile application. This provides a real-time way for a user to confirm that their recent updates are in fact pushing out to other system users.
  - The *My Edits* button must be triggered by the user before any mobile app updates on the mobile device are pushed or synced up to the cloud servers to become visible to other users. The most common indication that a user has pending *My Edits* syncs that have not yet happened, is when other system users are not yet able to see a new incident that has been created on the mobile app, or they do not yet have visibility on updated incident information created on another user’s mobile device.
  - Use of the *My Edits* button is the only method for “pushing up” data from a mobile device to other users on the system. The mobile app does automatically pull in updated information from the system on a period basis, however the *My Edits* button is the only method for pushing up data from a particular mobile device.
  - Additionally, manual use of the half-circle “*data sync*” button at the top of the mobile app home screen only pulls down updated system information. Use of this button does not trigger a push of new data from that mobile device to other users, that can only be accomplished with the *My Edits* button.

## **Last Week**

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### **Forestland Conservation**

- ◆ Terry Lasher (assistant state forester) participated in a virtual call with the New York State Ranger Schools Academic Advisory Committee. The purpose of the committee is to discuss current and potential curriculum choices and needs in order to provide the student and the profession with graduates that can better serve our natural resources.
- ◆ Lara Johnson (urban & community forestry [U&CF] program manager), Molly O'Liddy (U&CF partnership coordinator) and Joe Lehnen met with Katie Fernholz of Dovetail Partners to discuss the Urban Forest Management Plan Template. Dovetail is working to build out certain aspects of the plan including the urban wood utilization piece. The template should be ready for field foresters before the end of the year.

### **Forest Resource Management**

- ◆ Katlin DeWitt (forest health specialist) and Teagan O'Brien (forest health technician) completed the first trap check of southern pine beetle traps on Monday, April 5 at Cumberland and Prince Edward State Forests. These traps are part of 25 traps placed throughout Virginia at locations with high pine densities to monitor for southern pine beetle populations. Remaining traps are monitored by nine VDOF foresters in nine counties.
- ◆ On Wednesday, April 7, Forest Health staff attended a webinar about trapping for emerald ash borer (EAB) parasitoids at locations where these insects have been released. This webinar was put on by

entomologists at USDA Agricultural Plant Health Inspection Service that are responsible for rearing, releasing, and monitoring parasitoid wasps to control the emerald ash borer.

- ◆ Katlin DeWitt and Jerre Creighton (research program manager) participated in a virtual presentation on Invasive Plant Management on April 8 for a Master Gardener class covering seven central Virginia counties. Katlin spoke on invasive plant control techniques while Jerre spoke on specific herbicide recommendations as well as a review of glyphosate and concerns about its use.
- ◆ On April 5, VDOF and members of the Black Family Land Trust (BFLT) held a quarterly conference call. The call was attended by Ebonie Alexander and Kay Hamlin of BFLT, Robbie Talbert, Bryant Bays (regional foresters), Todd Groh (forest resource management program manager) and Dean Cumbia (director of forest resource management). Topics included updates and potential new work generally, and with specific landowners, seeking owners to interview regarding the Reforestation of Timberlands Program, and the importance of cultural history and forest management. The quarterly calls provide an important opportunity to stay connected and continue collaborative efforts.

### Agency Lands

- ◆ Garland Gray Forestry Center completed its loblolly pine lifting and grading operation on April 2. Final harvest and sale numbers will be available by the end of April. A total of 28,606,000 seedlings have been graded this year. Fumigation will begin at the nursery April 19.
- ◆ A recent Pew Trust article, "[States Are Growing Fewer Trees. Forest Owners Say That's a Problem](#)," examines the decline of state nurseries in the United States. The article states, "*The foresters' association survey found that seedling production at state-run nurseries fell by 28% between 2016 and 2018.*" According to the article, in 2018, state nurseries produced 123 million seedlings, about a tenth of the nation's total. Based on the numbers in the article and current production, VDOF's two nurseries account for 23 percent of all the tree seedlings grown in all the state tree nurseries in the United States.
- ◆ Augusta Forestry Center (AFC) field staff performed regular spring maintenance at AFC. As well as continue to ship orders. The office has taken in 2029 orders with a total of \$683,704 dollars.
- ◆ Ones Bitoki (tree improvement forester), Jeff Stout (tree improvement technician), Harvey Darden (former agency lands director), Ben Duke (state forest technician), Dennis Gaston (forest management specialist), Jim Schroering (longleaf/southern pine beetle [SPB] prevention coordinator) and Jerre Creighton completed 170 new grafts in the longleaf pine gene conservation/seed production orchard at the New Kent Forestry Center. This includes grafts from a total of 43 different parent genotypes, 11 of which had never been captured in the orchard previously.

### Central Region

- ◆ Jim McGlone (urban forest conservationist) recorded three programs for the United Service Organization (USO) Garden Works project. The programs will be posted on their Facebook page, which is viewed nationally. The three topics were: Arbor Day and tree planting; "Squaring the Circle" root pruning for container grown trees; and Earth Day and Cicadas.
- ◆ Kinner Ingram (community forestry specialist) assisted the Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) with a 102-acre prescribed burn at the Chester F. Phelps Wildlife Management Area (WMA) in Fauquier County. The purpose of the burn was to decrease the amount of maple and beech in the WMA to create better habitat for wild turkey.

### Eastern Region

- ◆ On Wednesday, April 7, Raina DeFonza (public relations specialist) and Dean Cumbia met with Dave Slack (area forester) regarding recording information about commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Reforestation of Timberlands (RT) program. The group visited a tract in King and Queen County owned by the family of a participant in the RT program in 1971, the first year of the program. In an interview format, Dave explained how VDOF delivers the program to landowners and the importance of the program. Additionally, Dave coordinated an interview with VDOF retiree Pickett Upshaw in King William County. Pickett worked for VDOF in the 1970's when the program was new. He shared experiences from the early years of the program, as well as his involvement with the program as a landowner.
- ◆ Clint Phegley (area forester) represented VDOF at a virtual career day for John Rolfe Middle School. During the career day Clint spoke with students about daily VDOF operations and how to become a forester.
- ◆ Eli Podyma (community forester) provided an interview for Henrico Public Schools 6th grade science classes. Eli gave insights on the role of local and state conservation professionals in managing natural resources including the use of sustainable forestry practices, wildlife protection, air, water, and soil conservation, and waste management.

### **Western Region**

- ◆ First responders teamed together to deliver AAA service to an elderly person who ran out of gas on a busy road. Jon Perry (forest technician) and an ambulance driver stopped traffic and together pushed the driver's vehicle 200 yards to a nearby gas station.
- ◆ Rocky Wood (forest technician) joined an investigator from the Buchanan County Sheriff's Office in an interrogation of a timber theft suspect. The county is taking the lead in this matter with assistance from VDOF.

### **Public Information**

- ◆ Field Notes posts:
  - [Buffer Benefits for Trail and River](#)
  - [Restoration Planting at Mariners' Museum and Park](#)

### **News Clips**

- ◆ [Campus Trees at VA Tech Help Train Next Generation of Arboriculturists](#)
- ◆ [Fire crews, forestry service monitoring Campbell County brush fire](#)
- ◆ [Turning Wood Into Plastic](#)
- ◆ [STAFFORD: Series helps landowners with legacy planning](#)
- ◆ [Understanding Seasonality in Timber Prices](#)
- ◆ [Solar Development, Forest Protection Need Better Balance](#)
- ◆ [Maya Lin's Ghost Forest will open in Madison Square Park alongside a slew of programming](#)
- ◆ [Leading Standards and Urban Forestry Partners Collaborate to Develop a New SFI Urban and Community Forest Sustainability Standard](#)
- ◆ [THE SUSTAINABLE ALTERNATIVE TO LEGO ARE THESE BUILDING BLOCKS ENTIRELY CARVED FROM TIMBER](#)
- ◆ [USDA, partners unveil new fire mapping tool with national wildfire management implications](#)

- ◆ [Callery Pear Trees' Spring Blossoms Threaten VA Biodiversity](#)
- ◆ [Pinpoint Weather: Tranquil and warm pattern continues](#)
- ◆ [BIOPLASTIC THAT CAN DEGRADE ENTIRELY IN THREE MONTHS](#)
- ◆ [Forester who planted 2 million trees uproots for next adventure](#)
- ◆ [NEW TOOL AIMS TO HELP FOREST OWNERS WITH FIRE MANAGEMENT](#)
- ◆ [Land near McAfee Knob added to Jefferson National Forest](#)
- ◆ [Why are Timber Prices Low?](#)
- ◆ [This Vashon Island man is making custom bicycles... out of wood!](#)
- ◆ [New legislation strengthens 'conservation purpose' of land easements](#)
- ◆ [Finding solace among trees: Effort underway to protect George Washington National Forest](#)
- ◆ [Auburn University researcher demonstrates NASA satellite's ability to observe forest health](#)